

To: Environment and Natural Resources Committee 2-25-2026

We are here today to REIMAGE THE ANDROSCOGGIN FROM THE "DIRTY LOO" up to the dream of Sen. Muskie's CLEAN WATER ACT OF 1972, FISHABLE AND SWIMMABLE! It has only taken 54 years! Muskie is my Hero and he inspired my Environmentalism since 72 when I graduated from his alma mater, Bates College. The Androscoggin was then listed as One of the Top 10 Polluted rivers in the country and I can attest to that from the Smell and the eight feet of foam below the Great Falls in downtown Lewiston at that time.

- HISTORY: The Industrial Revolution of the 1850's turned the River into an open Sewer of industrial byproducts and raw human waste. In 1942, the waste created toxic air pollution and the Maine Supreme Court appointed Dr. Walter Lawrance, a Bates College Chemistry professor, as River Master to analyze the procedure to save the river. He was one of my mentors and retired in 1977 after 35 years. The Clean Water Act required Human Waste treatment and the first on the River was in LA in 1976. That was followed by Sen. John Nutting's COLOR, ODOR AND FOAM BILL, in the 1980's, The Dioxin bill, and the Phosphorus Bill in the 1990's and early 2000. The River started getting cleaner and recreation expanded with the ARWC's "Source to The Sea" summer canoe trips, fishing on Gulf Island Pond, The Androscoggin Land Trust's 2,000 acre Riverland State Park in Turner along with Lewiston and Auburns Walking paths and viewing of the Great Falls.

- **GROW L+A WAS FORMED TO SAVE MILL 5 AND GROW L+A RIVER WORKING GROUP'S MISSION STATEMENT IS TO BE THE CONDUIT BETWEEN LEWISTON AND AUBURN FOR "BESTS USE OF THE RIVER"**.
 The Grow LA River Group has been volunteering through ARWC's DEP volunteer program of DO testing along the River bank for the past 10 years. We have worked with both city administrations creating a "WALKING HISTORY TRAIL, MUSEUM IN THE STREETS", along the walking paths connecting both cities and circumnavigating the Great Falls. The walking paths and History Trail brings people downtown to enjoy our natural wonders. The two cities both have Riverfront plans for the future asking Brookfield for 40 timed releases over THE GREAT FALLS, on Friday or Saturday evenings and for kayaking at Dressers Rips a mile downstream.
- **Economics and Aesthetics OF REIMAGING THE RIVER TO CLASS B**
 Many people still think of the River as polluted and reclassifying to Class B will let the public know the River has mended and invites them down to participate. Samples: The Dempsey Challenge, The Balloon Fest, The River Fest Crew Races, the Fourth Of July fireworks, The Great Falls when it is running, Baxter Brewfest, Veterans Park, Festival Plaza, Simard Payne Park, Lewiston Rowing Club. It is interesting to note how Biddeford, Westbrook, Skowhegan have all embraced their Rivers and developed around them. Lewiston and Auburn both have these goals with millions of Square feet of old Mill building available on the River for redevelopment for housing and commercial use.
- **Precedence has Been set: Last Triennial we applied for Class B. Class B was awarded from Worumbo, Lisbon Falls, down to Brunswick to Class B and our exact same appeal was rejected up to Gulf Island Dam.** We have continued to do the testing along with Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and worked with them on our Helicopter testing this past drought season with confirmed Class B on all testing runs. We have the data to prove our stance!
- **The Law says, "When a river meets a higher rating, it must be reclassified to the higher level and not allowed to slip backwards, antidegradation". Classification is GOAL ORIENTED as is Muskie's Clean Water ACT.**
- **MDEP Claims that their computer model does not meet class B even though all the data over the past 15 years shows that it does.**

- OUR APPEAL TO THE ENRC IS TO VOTE APPROVAL OF LD2187 AND INCLUDE THE ANDROSCOGGIN FROM GULF ISLAND DAM DOWN TO WORUMBO FALLS, LISBON, AS CLASS B TO TAKE EFFECT THIS SUMMER.

ED MUSKIE IS MY HERO AND I HOPE WE CAN PUT A SMILE ON HIS FACE!

Respectfully, Peter Rubins



GROW L+A

Chair; GROW L+A RIVER WORKING GROUP

Group Includes:

Androscoggin Land Trust

City of Auburn

City of Lewiston

Trout Unlimited

American Whitewater

Androscoggin Historical Society

Bates College

AMC

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

LA metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

Merrymeeting News

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Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of the Bay through:

Education

Conservation & Stewardship

Research & Advocacy

Member Events

Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and gifts.

Merrymeeting News is published seasonally and is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay. Article hyperlinks and color images are available in our online edition at www.fomb.org

For more information, contact:

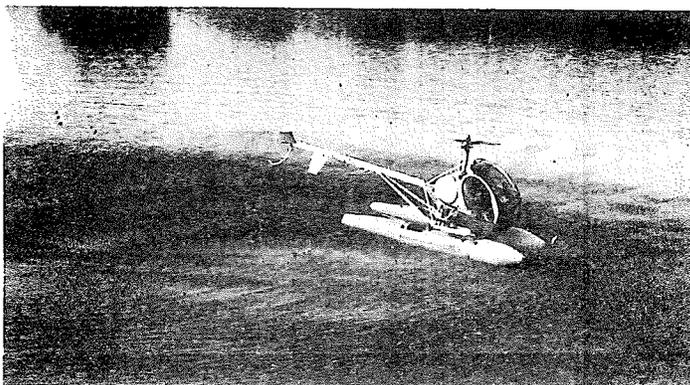
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Upgrading the Upper Lower Androscoggin

In 2022–2023, after many years of data gathering and reclassification attempts, FOMB used our water quality data to successfully upgrade state classification of the lower Androscoggin River from Class C to Class B, a much higher standard. The upgraded section runs from Worumbo dam in Lisbon Falls to Merrymeeting Bay. That section had been classified as Class C for many years, even though its actual quality met the Class B standard. When actual quality surpasses that of the classification this leaves room to pollute while the discharger continues to comply with the existing but lower standard.

There is a great deal of interest in extending the upgrade further up river from Lisbon Falls to Gulf Island Pond (GIP). In the most recent DEP nomination request for upgrades, our partners at Grow L+A submitted a proposal to bring this section from Class C to Class B. The DEP does not support this. Existing but limited water quality



Departing site A3.
Photo: Aquaterra Films

data for the section mostly indicate Class B but are somewhat sporadic. Last year we looked at the possibility of using a helicopter with amphibious floats as a means to gather comprehensive data in support of the upgrade with limited personnel. We did a trial flight in 2024 and were very successful at sampling a longitudinal profile of 10 sites from Lisbon Falls into GIP with two people in about 1½ hours. In light of this, the Merrymeeting Bay Chapter of Trout Unlimited and FOMB have split the cost of six flights this year, one in June, two each in July and August, and one in September (our focus is on hot and dry worst-case conditions) in an effort to provide the most comprehensive data to date on this section to back up the proposal, if supported by our findings.

As I write this on 8/28, our results so far, with five of six flights completed, have been outstanding, with all stations for each sampling flight (55 samples to date including replicates) easily meeting **Class B standards**. For Class B, dissolved oxygen (DO) must have a minimum geometric mean of **7 parts per million (ppm)** and *E. coli* must not exceed a geometric mean of **64 colonies/100 ml** over a 90 day period.

So far, combined geometric mean station results from Lisbon Falls to GIP are: **7.8 for DO** and **17.3 for *E. coli***.

The Board of Environmental Protection will hold a public hearing October 16 on all classification proposals and some other proposed changes to statutory language.



Hannah grabs bacteria sample.
Photo:
Point of View Helicopter Services

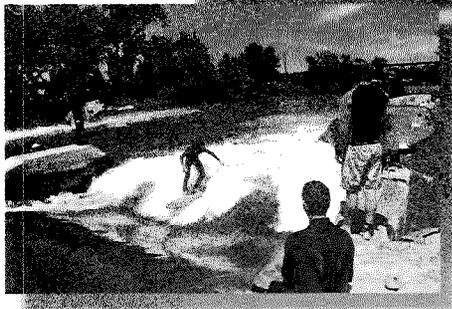
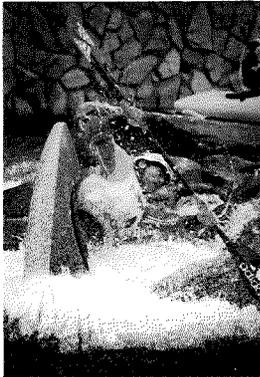
Ed Friedman

**PHASE I
MILLS 5 AND 6**

World-class surfing waves for kayaks and surfboards

1. Lower flow features for river surfing and boogie boards using adjustable wave features
2. Timed releases of high flow for kayak surfing
3. Create a dramatic public viewing area at the south end of Mill 5. Improve viewing area adjacent to Mill No. 6
4. Rehabilitate water control structures to control flow

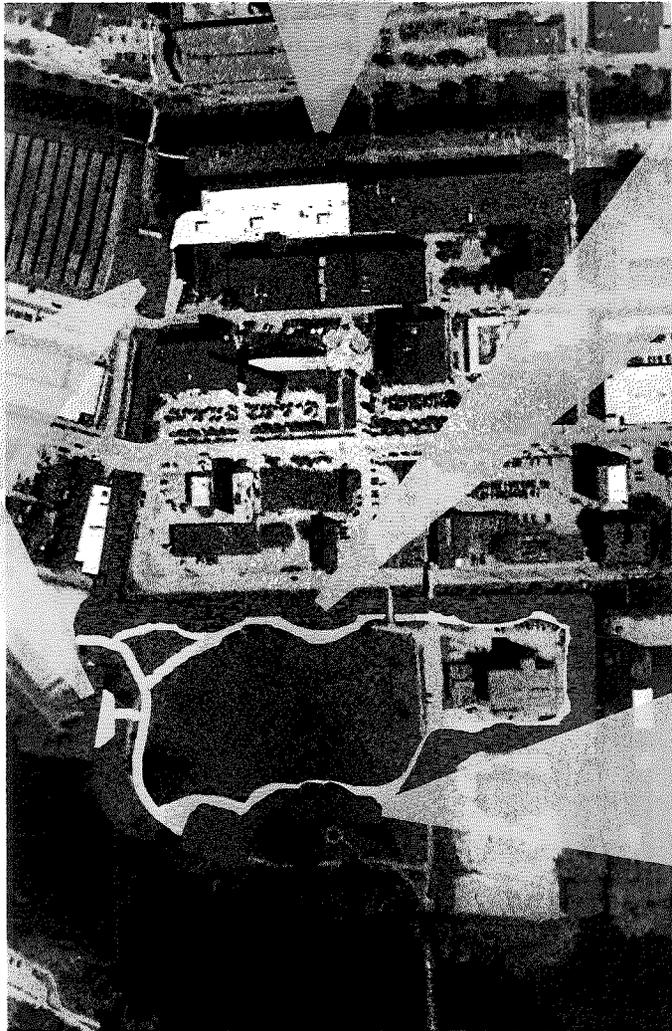
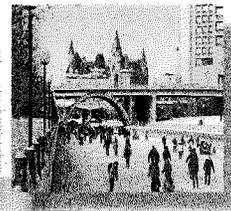
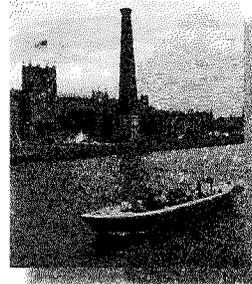
Precedents: Boise whitewater park, Idaho



**PHASE IV
LOWER POWERHOUSE**

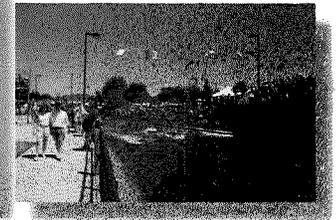
Additional World-class surfing waves for kayaks and surfboards

1. Lower flow features for river surfing and boogie boards using adjustable wave features
2. Timed releases of high flow for kayak surfing
3. Re-orient the amphitheatre to create a public viewing area of the whitewater features
4. Rehabilitate powerhouse gates to control flow



2. Feasibility access at the water level on at least one side of the canal
3. Attractive night lighting and warming huts in the winter, light food service

Precedents: Augusta, GA, Canal, Ottawa Canal

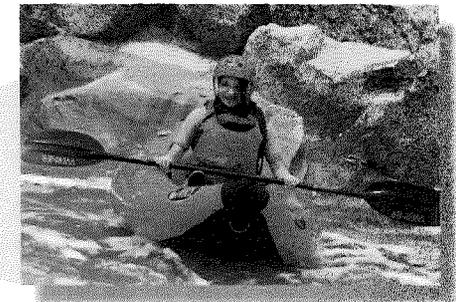


**PHASE II
OXFORD STREET REACH:**

International caliber whitewater slalom course and rafting venue

1. Steep gradient
2. Create an attractive pedestrian pathway for viewing at the water level
3. Slower water resting areas for self rescue and spectator viewing

Precedents: South Bend, IN East Race Whitewater Course, Adventure Sports Center, Maryland



**PHASE III
SIMARD PAYNE PARK REACH**

Family rafting, tubing and personal inflatables

1. Lower gradient
2. Meandering natural feel with slower water and resting pools
3. Create natural appearing, landscaped earth forms adjacent to the excavated cut for the water canal.

Precedents: Adventure Sports Center, Maryland

A VISION FOR RECREATION ON THE LEWISTON HISTORIC CANAL

"Running of POWERFALLS, Our Little Niagara," along with Museum In The Streets.

The Falls will start running in a couple of weeks for Spring runoff.

Attached is the Grow L+A River Working Group Mission statement and projects.

Ideas:

Lights & Lasers

(May 15-18, 2019)

Themed around Magic Valley History, combining music, narration and lasers to project on the falls). They sell tickets - \$12/admission

Shoshone Falls (Magic Valley)
Southern Idaho



Ontario

Free evening light shows

- Create art
- Worthy of photos

Some falls that have been illuminated:

- Great Falls
- Sherman Falls
- Scenic Falls
- Smokey Hallow Falls
- Tiffany falls

